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ABSTRACT

The report on education in Sri Lanka is presented in two parts. Part I describes the structure of the educational system. Information is included on principles of educational development as set forth in the Constitution of 1972, educational administration, teacher education, management and funding of different levels of education, selection criteria for pursuing studies, general and higher education certificates, decentralized curriculum planning, and examination reform. Part II is a report of progress in educational development from 1974-76. During this period, policy orientations were introduced by the government which changed education from an academic, elitist system to a progressive and democratic one. These policy reorientations were accompanied by new legislative measures, decentralization of educational administration and management, introduction of core curricula on primary and secondary levels, intensified in-service programs for teachers, and development of programs for school drop-outs, adults, and workers. Major problems which must still be resolved include a high drop-out rate, high educational costs, regional inequities, and insufficient relevance of the educational system to the social needs of Sri Lanka.
(Author/DB)

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36TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON EDUCATION, GENEVA - SEPTEMBER, 1977

Country Report from Sri Lanka (Ceylon)

1.00 Purpose and Scope of the Report

This country report is primarily aimed at disseminating information among member states about the structure and organization of the Education System in Sri Lanka and the recent developments made in the field of Education during the last two years. It is hoped that this background material would provoke and stimulate a useful discussion among the various representatives who are likely to participate in this International Conference on Education. This country paper will consist of two parts; viz; Part I - A Brief description of the structure and the organization of the Education System in Sri Lanka.

Part II - A report of the progress achieved in Educational development during the last two years (1974/75) to 1975/76).

2.00 Country Report

Part I - Organization and Structure of the
Education System in Sri Lanka.

General Principles.

The Constitution of the Republic of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) enacted by the Constituent Assembly on the 22nd day of May 1972 provides for the following principles of State Policy relevant to educational development, (vide page 9 - Constitution of Sri Lanka (Department of Printing, Sri Lanka, 1972).

"The Republic is pledged to carry forward the progressive advancement towards the establishment in Sri Lanka of a Socialist democracy, the objectives of which include - (a) full realization of rights and freedoms of citizens including groups rights;

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- (f) raising the moral and cultural standards of the people;
- (g) and the organization of society to enable full flowering of human capacity both individually and collectively in the pursuit of good life".

Implicit in these principles of State policy is the provision of educational facilities to all children of school going age as a fundamental human right irrespective of caste, creed and religion etc., and the equalization of educational opportunity through appropriate means.

Further, the first Throne Speech of the present Government in Sri Lanka (1970) explicitly states that educational opportunities would be broadened in order to make education accessible to all and also would enhance and improve the provision of science and technical education facilities. Further, it states that action would be taken to eliminate the imbalance that exist between urban schools and rural schools in relation to the availability of educational facilities.

The constitutional provision referred to above in relation to Education derives its basic framework from the relevant statements in the First Throne Speech of the present Government referred to above. These policy statements provided the basic strategy for the formulation of the Sri Lanka Government's Five Year Plan of Development, (1972-76).

In Sri Lanka, Education is free from Grade 1 right through to the University. It is compulsory for all children of the age group 6 - 15⁺ (Grades 1 - 9). This is essentially the grade span required for the 'successful' completion of basic education (5 years of Primary and 4 years of Junior Secondary). These programmes provide for basic literacy, numeracy, society, and for the development of useful and relevant vocational skills and attitudes. Further, the understanding of the various resources in the country and the way how these could be exploited

for productive purposes and the development of an appreciation of the cultural heritage of the country and aesthetic activities such as art, music and dancing are also provided for through these basic education programmes.

There is no selection at this stage, the basic principle of admission being equal access devoid of any discrimination on economic, social or cultural or any other grounds. This principle applies to both males and females and all groups of children whether privileged or under-privileged.

The Education System in Sri Lanka which is organized in approximately 8,600 Government schools is mostly co-educational. However, a few schools exist either exclusively for girls or exclusively for boys. These are mostly some of the Assisted Schools vested in the Government, since 1960. The programmes of education at the tertiary level, technical/vocational schools and teacher education institutes are also co-educational to a large extent except in a small number of teacher education institutes.

System of Administration.

(1) The Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka is responsible for the provision of free educational facilities to all children of school going age. The Ministry Head Quarters located in the capital city of Colombo is responsible for policy formulation in respect of education, provision of funds, and other resources and for the general co-ordination and direction. The implementation of the education programmes in the 26 educational districts (17 education regions) is carried out through 17 Regional Offices of Education. Each Regional Office is staffed by a Director of Education who in turn is assisted by a Chief Education Officer, Education Officers and other supporting staff depending on the number of educational institutes, in the region. Hence, the administration of education in Sri Lanka is to a great extent decentralized with central direction, control and guidance. The planning function in respect of education is carried out centrally under the direction and guidance of the

Secretary, Ministry of Education who is also the Director-General of Education. The supervision programmes which are essentially concerned with the provision of professional guidance to practising teachers operate centrally as well as at the Regional/District level. The research programmes in education which are essentially aimed at identifying major educational problems and formulating ways and means of solving them are generally initiated at the Ministry level in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Centre and selected practising teachers. However, provision is also available for the initiation of research even at the District/Regional level provided the necessary initiative and professional leaderships are available.

Some significant innovations in relation to public participation in educational development has been introduced in the organization and administration of education in Sri Lanka. This relates to the organization of Parent Teacher Association in schools, whose function is to provide the necessary collaboration and support for the development of education in the various institutions concerned. These may range from the construction of classrooms, playgrounds and science laboratories etc., to advisory roles on school organization and management, in extreme cases depending on the nature and composition of the group concerned. The Central Government administration in general, has provided for the organization of district development councils each under the leadership of a Political Authority who is invariably a Minister or a Deputy Minister. The District Development Councils comprises representatives of the various Ministries of the Government such as Agriculture, Health, Industries, Co-operatives, Irrigation and Education etc., the Local Administrative Authority, the Government Agents of the District concerned, and elected representatives of the National State Assembly. The Political Authority, who is the Chairman of the District Development Council provides the leadership for the various development programmes in the district concerned including those of education. This is a major innovation in the organization and management of education, where some elements of micro planning at the grassroot level operates with local leadership and participation. In the organization and implementation of Pre-vocational education programmes

at the Junior Secondary Level, project work at the Senior Secondary Level, out of school education programme for school leavers and Inplant Training programmes, assistance either in the form of advice or direct participation is being received from various organizations, sources and individuals, such as the District Development Councils, Voluntary Organizations, technicians in the community and professionals. This has enabled the Ministry of Education not only to bridge the gap between schools and various communities but also to draw the participation of the community in the organization of school education programme.

The National State Assembly provides funds annually for the maintenance and development of education in Sri Lanka. These provisions are made in the Annual Budgetary Estimates of the Government of Sri Lanka on the basis of estimates made by the Ministry of Education. The current year's provision for the maintenance and development of education in Sri Lanka is approximately Rs. 934 million (nearly 117 million U.S. Dollars.) These funds are meant for the payment of salaries to teachers and other personnel provision of equipment, buildings and materials, etc. However, some indirect costs on education are also borne by the parents by way of expenditures incurred on the purchase of books and transport etc.

The following table illustrates the magnitude of the Government's effort in the provision of educational facilities in Sri Lanka during the period:

(In Sri Lanka Rupees)

Year	Total Govt. Budget Rs.	Total Educational Budget Rs.	Education Budget as a percentage of the total Budget
1975	7,433,531,333	739,590,185	9.8
1976	8,349,467,469	814,222,746	9.8

(U.S. Dollars = 8.0 Sri Lanka Rs.)

Source : Annual Estimates of the Govt. of Sri Lanka.

These costs include both recurrent and capital costs and covers all levels of Education. Approximately 4.4% of the G.N.P. is spent annually on Education in Sri Lanka. In addition State funds are supplemented through parental contributions and programmes of various external assistance such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and Colombo Plan etc. However, these contributions are insignificant in comparison to the State's commitment on Education.

Structure and Organization.

The General Education System in Sri Lanka is of 11 years duration and comprises the following levels :

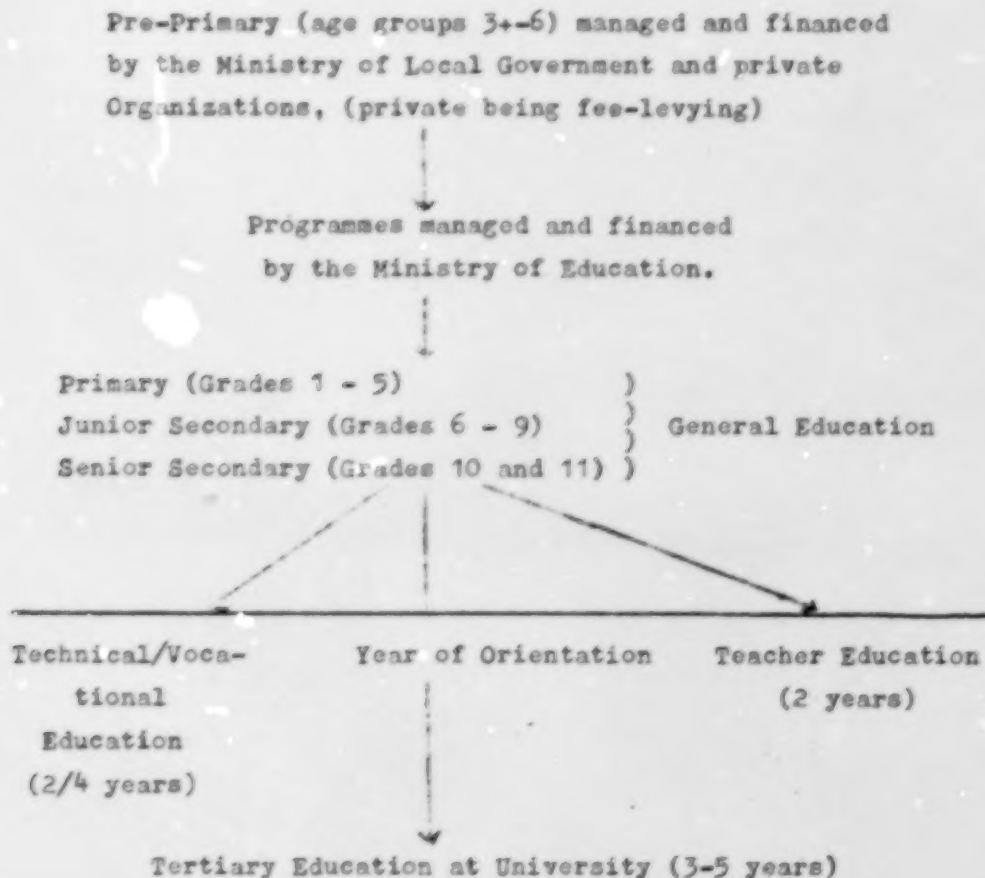
- Level I - Primary - Grades 1 - 5 (age 6 - 11⁺)
- Level II - Junior Secondary - Grades 6 - 9 (11-15⁺)
- Level II - Senior Secondary - Grades 10 and 11 (15-17⁺).

There is no provision for pre-primary under the management of the Ministry of Education. However, private organizations and the Ministry of Local Government provide pre-school educational facilities to children in the age groups 3⁺ to 6. To this extent the coverage of provision of pre-school education is limited.

The Technical/Vocational programmes operate in 15 Technical Institutes (Junior, and Senior Technical Institutes) and these provide Middle level Technician and Craft level programmes in a variety of fields.

The Teacher Education programmes which are also vocationally oriented operate in 27 Teacher Education institutions. These provide both general Teacher Education programmes as well as specialist programmes in Science, Maths, Commerce and English teaching etc. The Tertiary education programmes are provided in the University of Sri Lanka which has six Campuses. They provide a variety of graduate courses in Science, Engineering, Medicine, Dentistry, Architecture, Social Studies, Law and Humanities etc., in addition to some post-graduate programmes in Medicine, Agriculture and Education. The extension services units of the

University of Sri Lanka and the Ceylon Technical College, provide a variety of Diploma/Degree programmes in Science, Mathematics and Management Studies etc., through correspondence. These programmes are aimed at equalizing educational opportunities particularly at the Tertiary level and will eventually lead to a programme of "Open University " Education once fully developed. A schematic representation of the different levels of education in Sri Lanka is presented below :



The first nine year General Education Programme which is compulsory to all children of school-going age culminates in the National Certificate of General Education Examination. This examination serves as a basis of selection for pursuing studies at the Senior Secondary level or may even be terminal for those who opt to leave the system. The two years of General Education,

viz. Senior Secondary Education which immediately follow the National Certificate of General Education Examination leads to the Higher National Certificate of Education Examination. This examination serves as a basis of selection for admission to the University of Sri Lanka, Technical Institutes, Teacher Education Institutes and entry of Middle level avenues of employment such as in the clerical services. The University courses which range from 3-5 years lead to degrees in Science, Medicine, Engineering and Humanities etc. depending on the nature and type of the programme.

The National Certificate of General Education and the Higher National Certificate of Education examinations are both public examinations designed and administered under the direction of the Commissioner of Examinations. All school examinations are essentially conducted at the school level twice a year. The examination practices that obtain in the Teacher Education institutes, Technical Colleges and the Universities vary in nature and type depending on the nature and composition of the programme. However, the final examinations of the Teacher Education Institutes and Technical Institutes are conducted by the Commissioner of Examinations while the final examinations of the University of Sri Lanka are conducted by the Ministry authorities.

The School year in respect of Technical institutes, Teachers' Colleges and schools starts in January and terminates in December each year. The University of Sri Lanka also follows a similar pattern with slight variations depending on circumstances.

Curricula.

The Ministry of Education has institutionalized curriculum development, examination reform and in-service training operations through the establishment of a Curriculum Development Centre with all the requisite facilities and professionally trained personnel. The Curriculum Development Centre is under the charge of a Deputy Director-General of Education who is assisted by three Directors

of Education and several Chief Education Officers and Education Officers. The curriculum design teams consist of practising teachers and University personnel depending on the type of the course and level for which it is meant. The centralized curriculum design operations is carried out through specialist committees. All the primary education curricular programmes are designed centrally at the National Level by such committees under the direction and guidance of a Director of Education who is in charge of the subject.

The Junior Secondary curricular programmes in First Language, Second Language, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Aesthetic Education, Health and Physical Education and Religious Education are also designed centrally at the National level by specialist committees consisting of practising teachers. The curricular material in respect of the recently introduced major innovation, namely Pre-vocational Studies is designed regionally and at the district level by practising teachers by taking into consideration the nature of the resources available and the vocations predominant in the various communities etc. However, these design activities are coordinated by the Central Staff in order to ensure that they conform to the basic philosophies and objectives of the programme of Pre-vocational Education. This practice of decentralized curriculum design is a major departure from the traditional practice of highly centralized curriculum renewal, where various indigenous elements in the curriculum is not often taken into consideration. The Pre-vocational Studies programme varies from district to district depending on the nature of the vocations practiced in the various school communities. To this extent there should be some differentiation in the content of the curricular programmes as opposed to other subjects such as science and mathematics where the general principles, the concepts and the generalization are universal in application.

At the Senior Secondary level too the curricular design operations are carried out at the National level by special committees appointed for the purpose comprising practising teachers and University personnel. The collaboration of University personnel in the design of curricular programmes is also another significant innovation hitherto unprecedented in the history of educational development in Sri Lanka. The identification of the various curricular streams, and the design of curricular material for the Senior Secondary programmes were carried out through the active participation of a diverse group of personnel comprising practising teachers, curriculum development specialists, relevant University personnel, employers from the private and public sector and personnel from relevant research organizations. This wider composition of the group enabled the Ministry of Education to draw personnel from a reservoir of specialised talent in the various disciplines in the country. This is particularly significant when viewed in the context of the employment oriented nature of the new Senior Secondary Education programmes. Another significant innovation at the Senior Secondary Level was the introduction of project work which is aimed at providing participant pupils an opportunity of studying the various socio-economic and cultural problems in the school community and to formulating and executing appropriate remedial measures with the assistance of teachers and members of the public. Further, in this exercise the community serves as a valuable learning resource to the participant pupils.

The design of the project work component of the Senior Secondary programmes takes place at the Regional/District level by taking into consideration the various resources available in the communities, and the problems confronted in development etc. However, broad guidelines for the design of material for the project work programme is provided by competent staff personnel in the Curriculum Development Centre. The in-service training programmes as well as the evaluation programmes are also directed

and designed at the central level. However, the implementation of the in-service education programmes are decentralized through the provision of special in-service education advisers who have been specially trained for the purpose.

The basic subjects taught at the various levels are indicated in the Annex I.

Teacher Education

The General entry requirements for Teacher Education are as follows :

- Should be under 45 years of age.
- Should have satisfactorily completed the GCE(OL) Examination, or the G.C.E. (AL) Examination.
- Should be practising teachers either in Government or Private schools.

For entry into Diploma courses and Post-graduate courses in Teacher Education the candidates should possess a degree of a recognized University and few years of teaching experience. The University of Sri Lanka provides Diploma, Post-graduate and Bachelor's Degree Education programmes for those with requisite qualifications. In addition the Ministry of Education provides teacher education programmes through correspondence for teachers who are not in a position to participate in regular institutionalized programmes, in particular to those with several years of teaching experience and in the age range of 45-55. These correspondence programmes are supplemented with intermittent institutionalized teacher educational facilities organized during school vacations. Teachers teaching at the Primary level are primarily general trained teachers whereas those teaching at the Junior Secondary level are predominantly specialist teachers. By and large the teachers who teach in the Senior Secondary Grades are graduates in the different fields of speciality.

The Teacher Education programmes which are organized in 27 Teacher Training Colleges are of two years duration and the curricula consists of both subject matter and pedagogy. These institutionalized training programmes are supplemented with regular in-service training programmes directed and managed by specialist staff at the Curriculum Development Centre. These in-service training programmes range from 1 - 10 days depending on the nature and the type of the programme and they are executed at the District and regional level. The design of the programmes is carried out centrally and funds for the programmes are apportioned to the Regional Directors for execution.

Part II. Development of Education in 1974-76.

1. New Policy Orientations.

The new policy orientations which govern the major educational reforms introduced in the system since 1972 relate to the following :

- (a) The replacement of the highly academic, elitist oriented University bound education system with a system of 'mass' education which integrates education with the world of work.
- (b) The progressive democratization of education through the equalization of educational opportunities.
- (c) Enhancement of the internal efficiency and the productivity of the system through appropriate programmes of educational reforms.

These policy orientations have been explicitly stated in the Government's Five Year Plan of Development 1972-76.

2. New Educational legislative measures.

During the period under review, no significant legislative measures in relation to education were instituted. However, draft bills have been prepared and submitted to the National State Assembly in the following fields.

- (a) Pirivena Education
- (b) Estate Schools.

The Draft Bill in relation to Pirivena Education deals with measures to be taken with a view to upgrading and consolidating programmes of Education implemented in about 260 religious institutions.

The Draft Bill in relation to Estate Schools has been prepared with a view to vesting with the Government some Estate Schools which are presently managed by Estate proprietors. These provide educational programmes at the primary level (Grades 1 - 5) in approximately 860 schools. This legislation is aimed at integrating these programmes with the General Education system in Sri Lanka. Both Estate Schools and Pirivenas though managed by private organizations are supplemented by financial grants from the State. A programme is presently under implementation for the progressive take-over of Estate Schools commencing from March, 1977.

3. Administration and Financing.

The programme of decentralization of educational administration and management was further extended during the period. A Regional Office of Education was organized in Homagama which was earlier under the management of the Director of Education, Colombo South. Further, a District Office was organized under the leadership of a Chief Education Officer in Minuwangoda which was earlier under the Director in-charge of Colombo North (Gampaha). The Ministry of Education in recognition of the need that exists for the provision of facilities for the development of professional competencies of staff personnel, organized a

programme of institutionalized training in educational management and administration. This programme which has been in operation during the last five months had provided training programmes to a large number of Circuit Education Officers. These programmes of training are fairly comprehensive in coverage and include content areas in relation to education administration, management and planning etc. The methods of training used ranges from lectures, discussion and workshops to case studies etc. These programmes will be organized for all categories of personnel in Sri Lanka Education Service, ranging from Heads of Schools, Circuit Education Officers to Directors Grade I.

The programme budgeting system adopted by the Ministry of Education has also been considerably improved and extended during the period under review. The work measurement indices used have been refined to make them more meaningful and relevant for purposes of decision making. The educational planning activities have also been reoriented and widened in scope to include certain aspects of planning of out of school education and to relate planning activities to actual implementation at field level.

A major innovation has also been introduced through the "Decentralized Budget" of the Government where funds for the construction of classrooms, playgrounds and teachers quarters, have been provided under the control and direction of the respective district political authority. This is an attempt at regional planning and implementation with the participation of all concerned at the grassroot level under the leadership of often a Minister or a Junior Minister of the Government. This has enabled the Ministry of Education to augment educational facilities, particularly in the rural under-privileged areas.

4. Development of the System.

- (a) The quantitative development of the General Education System during the period under review is presented below :

(Government Schools only)

<u>General Education</u>			<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
Total Enrolments	Grades 1 - 5		1,367,860	1,385,001
"	"	6 - 10	991,990	996,817
"	"	11 - 12	71,776	79,685
Total Enrolment in General Education			2,431,626	2,461,503

Technical/Vocation Education

Enrolment	Full-time	5,464	5,718
"	Part-time	5,235	5,176

Teacher Education

Total enrolment	Teacher Education	4,336	4,800
University of Sri Lanka	all Campuses	14,200	15,600

The in-service education programmes have been intensified during the period under review in order to meet the challenging needs of the new reforms. This has been achieved through the decentralization of in-service Teacher Education facilities by the appointment of in-service advisers in certain subject areas. The annual financial provisions made for the purpose have also been progressively increased during the period, to take care of the additional commitments by way of coverage in terms of subject areas, as well as the number of participant teaching personnel. The available data seems to indicate that during the period approximately 40,000 teachers have been provided with these facilities each year in a number of disciplines such as Science, Mathematics, Pre-vocational Education, Social Studies, First Language and Second Language (English) etc.

- (b) The Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka recognized the limitations of the formal education system and the consequent need to

provide initial opportunities for life-long education through appropriate programmes of non-formal education. In this context the Ministry of Education has taken action to formulate and implement some programmes which are non-formal in nature.

These relate to the following :

- (i) School leavers Programme.
- (ii) Janatha Education Programme (People's Education)
- (iii) Community Education through District University Colleges
- (iv) Extension Programmes.

(i) School Leavers Programme.

This programme is presently under implementation in about 400 schools covering a clientele of approximately 19,000. These programmes provide short-term vocational training in selected areas such as wood-work, metal-work, electrical wiring, plumbing and tractor repairs etc., depending on the needs of the clientele group, the resources available in the areas concerned and the middle level manpower demands in the respective areas. These are being planned and implemented in consultation with the Government's District Development Councils which are responsible for initiating and directing programmes of Regional Development. The People's Bank of Sri Lanka provides a loan of Rs.1000 (125 U.S.\$) for each participant once he or she terminates the training to enable him or her to take to self-employment. This programme will be progressively extended in the future years to encompass not only a large number of participants but also a variety of fields of training.

(ii) Janatha Education (People's Education).

This programme is presently in the exploitative stages of planning. These People's Centres will be organized on the basis of one per electorate (168 in all) on a progressive scale. The curricular programmes in these centres will range from literacy training, family improvement education dealing with areas such as Child Care, Nutrition, Health and some aspects of family planning etc., vocational training in specific areas and education for civic participation. Planning stage of this operation relates to the identification of the basic learning needs of the clientele concerned which includes the School leavers, adults with no formal schooling of both sexes. Having identified the learning needs the agencies that are already available for meeting these needs will be identified and their strengths and weaknesses will be ascertained and a final programme will be launched in collaboration with all the Ministries concerned such as Health, Agriculture, Industries etc., in order to prevent wasteful duplication. At the moment a series of in-service training programmes are being organized to orient field supervisory staff and teacher educators to meet the challenges and responsibilities of this major innovation.

(iii) Community Education.

The Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka is presently planning the organization of District University Colleges on the basis of five per district on a progressive scale to cover the 26 educational districts. These University Colleges will provide educational programmes to a variety of clientele ranging from School Leavers at various grades to those who have had no formal schooling belonging to both sexes. These programmes will include areas such as literacy training, educational training for community development, certain aspects of vocational training and also will serve as transfer programmes for later entry into regular University programmes. These will be organized in Training Colleges, Technical Colleges as well as in

some of the larger schools where appropriate facilities are available. The management of these programmes will be through advisory bodies consisting of various Government personnel, practising teachers and professionals in the various disciplines such as Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Agriculturists and Research Officers etc. The highly open selection procedure envisaged for these programmes will enable a large number of rural underprivileged children to pursue programmes in higher education which otherwise they would have missed, due to stringent selection procedures of Tertiary Education which invariably favour students from the higher socio-economic strata.

(iv) Extension Programmes.

The Ministry of Education has also started several programmes through extension and correspondence. These range from Diploma to Graduate programmes in the fields of Management, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies and Statistics etc. Where critical manpower shortage exist at the moment. This will in particular cater to those pupils who have failed to gain admission to formal University programmes due to a variety of reasons such as the inadequacy of facilities at the University level, high private cost of University Education and the high opportunity cost involved in formal University education. In other words these programmes will offer higher education opportunities to those who are already employed in various fields.

(c) The Country Report presented at the 35th Session of the International Conference on Education, Geneva, contains in detail the various educational reforms, the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka launched in 1972. Hence no attempt will be made to elaborate on these any further, unless it has a bearing and relevance to the period presently under review. The objectives of these reforms in general have been presented under the subtitle "New Policy Orientation" vide above. For any additional information please refer to the document titled 'Major Trends in Educational Development in Sri Lanka 1974-76 prepared as a preliminary to this document.

During the period under review the new primary education programmes were progressively introduced into Grades 1, 2 and 3 and in all the schools and in grade 4 classes in a selected number of schools on a pilot basis. This progressive introduction at every stage was preceded by a pilot programme carried out under close supervision and guidance by the Specialists concerned.

In the years 1974-75 the new Junior Secondary programmes were progressively introduced into Grades 8 and 9 classes of approximately 6000 schools. This culminated in the administration of the National Certificate of General Education Examination which was held for the first time in December 1975 and for the second time in December 1976. This examination which represents an innovation in examination design and its administration covered a pupil clientele of approximately 130,000 in 1975 and 260,000 in 1976. This examination comprising of structured essay questions and short answer objective type questions were supplemented with practical examinations in some subjects. Of the total number of candidates who sat this examination in 1975 approximately 18% qualified to pursue programmes of education in new Grade 10 classes in 1976. This Grade 10 class forms the foundation year of the new Senior Secondary Education programme. The results of the 1976 December examination have just being released and the preliminary estimates seems to indicate that approximately 20% who sat this examination have qualified to pursue the new Grade 10 programme in May 1977. The year 1976 has been one of review and consolidation in respect to this new Junior Secondary programmes. The feed back obtained from the examination as well as field visits has provided valuable material for effecting revision and amendments to the curricular programme in subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Social Studies and Pre-vocational Studies etc.

During the period under review the major innovation introduced in the system relates to the new Senior Secondary Education programme (Grades 10 and 11). For the first time in the history of Educational Development in Sri Lanka a large group

of professionals consisting of practising teachers, University Lecturers, Administrators, Employers and Research personnel were commissioned to identify the major streams of studies that should be provided at this stage. After considerable deliberations and discussions this committee identified the following curricular streams for implementation :

1. Science/Maths. Stream
2. Commerce and Business Administration Stream.
3. Agricultural and Home Economics Stream.
4. Arts, Humanities and Aesthetic Stream.
5. Social Studies Stream.
6. Technical Science Stream (Grade 11 only).

In addition these professionals recommend the provision of a compulsory core-curriculum consisting of the following :

1. First Language (Sinhala/Tamil/English)
2. Second Language - do -
3. Our Cultural Heritage and the Socio-Economic Environment.
4. Elements of Socialism.
5. Elementary Statistics and Principles of Management.

Further provision was made for the teaching of compulsory programmes of project work which is an extension of the Pre-vocational Studies programme introduced at the Junior Secondary Level.

The introduction of the core-curriculum was based on the assumption that all pupils at this stage should be given an awareness and an understanding of the cultural heritage and the resources of the country, its form of government, its language and a basic understanding of elementary statistics and principles

of Management. The streams were decided basically on manpower grounds taking into consideration the future developmental needs of the country. The project work component of the curriculum is aimed at involving the pupils in solving socio-economic or cultural problems of the school community in collaboration with the teachers and the members of the community concerned. This enables the pupils concerned to get an awareness and an understanding of the various resources available in the communities, the problems encountered in the development of the various communities and to gain basic skills in Management, Organization and Planning. In the long run it is anticipated that this major innovation would enable education to contribute to the liberation of the masses and for the orientation of youth to understand the problems of development in their communities in particular and in the nation as a whole.

These new programmes were introduced in Grade 10 classes in 750 Secondary Schools in the Island commencing from May 1976 after the initial trial of project work in a number of pilot schools. Several discussions were held prior to this introduction at the Regional and District levels in order to explain the philosophy of these reforms, nature of its implementation and the problems likely to be encountered in its implementation. Further, several in-service education programmes were also held in order to re-orient the teachers concerned to face this new challenge. The syllabuses, curricular materials and the textbooks required for these programmes were prepared by competent personnel including University staff. The professional supervisory services were also strengthened and intensified in order to support these programmes.

5. Educational Research and Information Services.

The Ministry of Education has recognized the need to systematically organize programmes of educational research and development to provide a sound basis for policy formulation and future action. A National Development group has been appointed

to initiate and direct programmes of research of significance to education. The activities of this group are being supported by the Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development.

Specific provision has also been made during the period under reference to initiate programmes of educational research and development. The following research activities have been initiated during the period under review :

- (a) Child development studies in relation to concept formation in children.
- (b) Studies in relation to the suitability and appropriateness of the textbooks which are presently in use in the Junior Secondary level.
- (c) Design of appropriate diagnostic tests to study specific learning difficulties in children.
- (d) Study on Small Schools.

This Research Study is aimed at identifying the major problems confronted in the organization and administration of schools having an enrolment of less than 100 pupils each. This will include the ascertaining of causes for poor pupil participation, the problems associated with teaching and learning, the types of curricula and teacher education and appropriate for such smaller units. This programme is being carried out with the collaboration of UNICEF.

On the invitation of the Asian Centre of Education Innovation for Development of UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Bangkok, the following Research Studies have been prepared by appropriate Ministry officials with a view to disseminating useful information to other developing countries in the Third World:

- (1) Management of Educational Reforms in Sri Lanka.
- (2) Integrated Approach to Curriculum Development in Primary Education in Sri Lanka.
- (3) In-service Training of Teachers in Sri Lanka.
- (4) Examination Reforms in Sri Lanka.
- (5) Integrated Science in the Junior Secondary Schools in Sri Lanka.
- (6) Pre-vocational Education in Sri Lanka.
- (7) An Approach to Educational Planning in Sri Lanka.

Some of these have already been published by UNESCO under the series titled 'Experiments and Innovations in Education'. The other manuscripts are awaiting publication. These publications are available in English, French and Spanish.

6. Major Educational Problems to be Resolved.

Despite the Educational Reforms and Structural changes recently introduced in the system several problems such as the following still remain to be resolved :

- (a) Problems in relation to school drop-outs and repetitions. Efforts are being made to minimize these wastages through appropriate programmes of curricular renewal, provision of supporting services and parental education etc., but much remains to be achieved.
- (b) Design of low cost teaching technologies which are effective. Attempts are being made to design low cost Science and Maths teaching equipment and to manufacture them locally.

- (c) Elimination of area-wise imbalances in educational facilities. Attempts are being made to eliminate these imbalances through the preferential allocation of funds to remote, rural schools. However, considerable work needs to be done in this connection in the future.
- (d) Finding alternative funds for the maintenance and development of the system. The Education Budget in Sri Lanka has virtually reached a ceiling at the moment with an annual expenditure of about Rs.900 million. This expenditure is likely to escalate further in the future, particularly due to the recruitment of better qualified teachers, inflation and due to the fact that approximately 90% of the recurrent cost are consumed on teachers' salaries. Hence there is a need to focus attention of the Educational Managers on ways and means of supplementing government funds for the development of education.
- (e) Enhance the external productivity of the system. Considerable attempts have been made through curricular reforms in order to bridge the gap between the school system, its output and the needs of the society. It is too premature to evaluate the effect of these changes on society at large since the pupil clientele is still within the system. However, available evidence seems to indicate that these programmes have been launched in the right direction. Nevertheless, this is an area which needs considerable study and development as curricular changes should be continuous and adapt themselves appropriately to changing circumstances and needs to prevent obsolescence.

- (f) Co-ordination of existing programmes of formal, informal and non-formal education with a view to making education a life-long process. This is an area which requires considerable research and innovation.
- (g) The re-orientation of the system of administration and management in order to facilitate the implementation of the reforms introduced in the system. Considerable attempts have been made in the past to re-orient the system of management and administration to meet the challenges of the new reforms. However, there seems to be some gaps between plans and achievement and communication failures at different levels of operation. These need careful study and attention.

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Primary Education

The Primary Education curriculum consists of learning experiences derived from the pupil's environment. This relates to subjects such as environmental activities, creative studies and Aesthetic Studies in addition to Language, Mathematics and Religion. English is taught as a Secondary Language commencing from Grade 3 onwards. The teaching is primarily pupil-centred and activity-oriented, the teacher essentially playing the role of a mediator. There are no optionals at the primary level, the programme being common to all pupils who follow the new reforms.

Junior Secondary

The Junior Secondary programme consists of a compulsory common curriculum, the subjects included being :

First Language (Sinhala/Tamil/English)
Second Language (- do -)
Mathematics
Integrated Science
Social Studies
Health and Physical Education
Aesthetic Studies (Art/Music/Dancing/
Appreciation of the environment
Religion
Pre-vocational Studies I and II.

Senior Secondary

The Senior Secondary curriculum consists of a compulsory core, optional stream and compulsory project work. The compulsory core consists of the following :

First Language	(Sinhala/Tamil/English)	)	
Second Language	(Sinhala/Tamil/English)	)	
Our Cultural Heritage and the Socio Economic Environment		)	25% of teaching time of
Principles of Socialism		)	40 periods.
Principles of Management and Elementary Statistics.		)	

The optional streams are the following :

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|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Science/Maths Stream |) | |
| 2. Commerce/Business Administration Stream |) | |
| 3. Languages/Humanities Stream/Aesthetic Studies Stream |) | 65% of teaching No. of 40 periods |
| 4. Agriculture/Home Economic Stream |) | |
| 5. Social Studies Stream |) | |
| 6. Technical Science Stream (Grade 11 only. |) | |

The project work component which is also compulsory constitutes 10% of the teaching time and ranges from institution to institution depending on the nature of the problems in each community.

The Technical Education, the Teacher Education and the University Education programmes have a variety of curricular depending on the nature and type of the programme. The general degree programmes in Science and Humanities relate to the study of three subjects whilst special degree programme consists of a study of two subjects, one being subsidiary and the other being the major. The professional programmes in Engineering, Medicine and Architecture etc., provides for the teaching of a variety of subjects relevant to the particular field of study.

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